CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 1 AUGUST 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHINA TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT AND THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE CHINESE AND RUSSIAN TEXTS OF THE JOINT STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRESIDENTS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON 18 JULY 2000 CONCERNING ANTI-MISSILE DEFENCE

We have the honour to forward to you the Chinese and Russian texts of a joint statement made by the President of the People's Republic of China and the President of the Russian Federation on 18 July 2000 concerning anti-missile defence.

We would be grateful if this joint statement could be issued and circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed) HU Xiaodi
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of China
to the Conference on Disarmament

(Signed) Vasily SIDOROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Head of delegation of the
Russian Federation to the
Conference on Disarmament

JOINT STATEMENT BY JIANG ZEMIN, PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, AND VLADIMIR V. PUTIN, PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, ON ANTI-MISSILE DEFENCE

The President of the People's Republic of China and the President of the Russian Federation state as follows:

The development of the international situation has fully demonstrated the correctness of the conclusions and assessments relating to issues of anti-missile defence contained in the joint statement on Chinese-Russian relations on the threshold of the twenty-first century, adopted at the summit meeting between China and the Russian Federation on 23 November 1998, the Chinese-Russian press communiqué of 14 April 1999 on consultations on issues related to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the joint Chinese-Russian statement adopted at the summit meeting on 10 December 1999.

The 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (hereinafter the ABM Treaty) remains the cornerstone of global strategic stability and international security and forms the basis for a framework of key international agreements designed to reduce and limit strategic offensive weapons and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Upholding the ABM Treaty and strict compliance with its provisions are therefore matters of paramount importance.

In this connection, the plan by the United States of America to establish a national anti-missile defence system for the territory of its country, a system prohibited under the ABM Treaty, is a cause of profound concern. China and Russia hold that this plan is, in essence, aimed at seeking unilateral superiority in the military and security arena. Implementation of the plan would have the gravest adverse consequences for the security not only of China, Russia and other States, but also for that of the United States itself and for global strategic stability in the world as a whole. For that reason, China and Russia resolutely oppose this plan.

The collapse of the ABM Treaty would trigger another round of the arms race and reverse the positive trends that have emerged in international politics following the end of the cold war. This is emphatically not in the fundamental interests of any country in the world. Those countries pressing for an amendment of this fundamental treaty in the realm of disarmament will have to bear full responsibility for undermining international stability and security and for all the consequences resulting therefrom.

An analysis of current international realities demonstrates that it is quite unjustifiable to invoke the so-called missile threats from certain countries as a pretext for amending the ABM Treaty. Proposals for the so-called "amendment" of this Treaty are in effect a disguised attempt to contravene its provisions. Changing the text of the ABM Treaty is tantamount to scrapping the whole Treaty with all the negative consequences that this would entail. In the current strategic situation, it is vital that the integrity and force of the ABM Treaty should be preserved intact.

The proper response to the new challenges in the field of international security, the maintenance of world peace and the safeguarding of the legitimate security interests of all countries should not be to scrap the ABM Treaty, but instead to promote the establishment of a new, just and equitable international political order, to spurn the practice of power politics and the excessive use of military force in international affairs and further to strengthen regional and international security. At the same time, it is important that Russia and the United States of America should continue, on the basis of strict compliance with the ABM Treaty, the process of reducing offensive strategic weapons and should further intensify that process, with the involvement, in due course, of the other nuclear Powers. It is imperative that, with the use of political, legal and diplomatic means, stepped up international efforts be made to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, that the possibility be explored of gradually developing a global system for monitoring the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technologies and that countries engage in a broad and non-discriminatory dialogue and pursue cooperation in this area.

Non-strategic missile defence and international cooperation in this field, though not prohibited under the ABM Treaty, should nevertheless not be permitted to prejudice the security interests of other countries, to lead to the establishment or strengthening of exclusive military and political blocs or to undermine global and regional stability and security. Proceeding from this position, China and Russia voice their grave concern about and firm opposition to the plans of certain countries aimed at the deployment of such a non-strategic missile defence system in the Asia-Pacific region, which would have the negative impacts outlined above. The incorporation in any form of Taiwan into anti-missile defence systems set up by foreign States is unacceptable and will seriously undermine stability in the region.

The resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems is of prime importance. China and Russia call upon the international community to continue to give serious attention to the vigorous pursuit by the States concerned of anti-missile defence systems liable to undermine the global strategic balance and stability and to take the necessary measures to halt these perilous developments.

Progress to date in cooperation between China and Russia in maintaining the global strategic balance and stability gives cause for satisfaction. Building on the relationship of trust, equality and partnership in their strategic cooperation, China and Russia shall continue their close coordination in the matters outlined above and, within the framework of their respective international obligations, will continue to strengthen their cooperation in other related areas with a view to ensuring their own security as well as that of the region and the world as a whole.

(Signed) JIANG Zemin
President of the
People's Republic of China

(Signed) Vladimir V. PUTIN
President of the
Russian Federation

Beijing, 18 July 2000